

MR. MACDONALD'S LETTER

Continued from page 1.

actual bid of a reliable and responsible contractor to duplicate the present plant for about \$174,000; also the estimate of Engineer Sherred of the Newark Water Department, over his own signature and upon his professional reputation (which is of the highest) that the plant could not be duplicated for less than \$130,000. Moreover, neither this bid nor this estimate takes into account the large sums which would have to be expended for preliminary surveys, engineering expenses for preparing maps, plans, profiles and specifications; for advertising for bids; and also for the great additional expense which would necessarily be involved in restoring the streets and avenues of the town to their former condition.

What reliance, then, in the face of these figures of practical and responsible men, can be placed upon the "belief"—if indeed it is really the belief—of the Committee of Eight that the plant can be duplicated for about \$104,000, or even any figure approximating that?

I cannot forbear comparing the report of the Committee of Eight with that of the Town Council—the former tremendously verbose, but with little in it of actual value, and giving no really reliable figures; and the latter concise, clear and business-like and fortified by the figures of a responsible engineer and a reliable contractor. How can any citizen of Bloomfield hesitate for a moment between the two?

Those who have had any actual experience in public works will certainly pay more attention to, and place more confidence in, the figures of practical engineers and contractors than those of lawyers and theorists. They know, besides, that the estimates of the most competent engineers are very often, if not usually, exceeded by the actual cost of large public works.

Moreover, the question of the time which would be required to make the preliminary surveys for a new plant, the engineering maps, the working plans and specifications, before bids could be advertised for, and the further time required to construct and lay a plant comprising twenty-eight miles of pipe, was not gone out at all in the report of the Committee of Eight or at the public meeting. Nor was the very important item of the expense of these preliminary engineering services and of the expense and the salaries of inspectors during the progress of the work gone into at all. Yet all these expenses have not only to be considered, but to be not and paid.

Another weighty consideration not touched upon in the report of the Committee of Eight is involved in the bonds which will have to be issued by the town whether the present plant be purchased or a new one constructed. If the present plant be purchased, we have the assurance that all the bonds will be at once taken at 4 per cent, and at a sufficient premium to cover all the expenses connected with their issue. But if a new plant should be constructed we have no assurances whatever that these bonds could be readily issued, either for the same, or, in view of the many perplexing and dubious legal questions involved, I doubt very much whether they could be floated at all. There is a question which must certainly be guessed at, at least until we can be fully assured of our present standing and our future prospects.

The digging up of the streets in the town, the endless annoyances, inconveniences, and confusion which this would cause, not to speak of the manifold dangers to health and life incident to such a wholesale digging up of the streets, surely ought to be considered and weighed very seriously before embarking upon such an undertaking. And in addition to this, the further cost of replacing the streets in their present condition after such a wholesale tearing up must be estimated and considered, and this item alone would be very considerable. The citizens of Bloomfield have surely had some slight taste of these things in the condition of Bloomfield Avenue for the past six or seven months.

The town would be upset and for at least three years—with all the manifold and multiplied inconveniences, annoyances and dangers which this implies—also with the depreciation of real estate which would necessarily follow, besides the impossibility of selling or renting real estate upon almost any terms during all that time—and last, and certainly not least, with countless and almost innumerable risks and dangers to health and life. All these things must be considered whether you will or not.

The idea seems to pervade the entire report of the Committee of Eight—that was actually stated by more than one speaker at last night's meeting—that as soon as the Orange Water Company finds Bloomfield will not pay \$150,000, but proposes to construct a new plant, that company will hasten to accept the \$90,000 offered by the Committee of Eight. In a word, that the threat to build a new plant is a good and clever "bluff," which is certain to succeed. This is an idea which might do credit to a parcel of schoolboys. If the Committee of Eight, and its learned counsel, had taken the time to consider, they might have realized that so soon as the town had once embarked upon a scheme of constructing a new water plant it cannot withdraw, but must go on to the end, however bitter and costly this may prove to be.

In a word, this is serious public business, controlled by the principles of law and the public statutes, and cannot be degraded either into boys' play or a game of bluff.

Another important point, well worthy of consideration, is that the purchase of the present plant will get rid of the obnoxious character of the water company, or its successors, and any municipal plant which might be installed; also of the litigation which would certainly grow out of the existence side by side of two water plants. Sensible citizens and taxpayers will surely consider this weighty point, but, whether they do or not, you, gentlemen of the Town Council, charged with heavy responsibilities and the solemn obligation of your oath of office, must consider it.

It is surely practical and sensible to compare the price paid by the city of East Orange for its water plant and that asked from us. And this comparison is well and pertinently made in the report of the Town Council. The city of East Orange is admittedly the banner municipality of the State. It is not likely to drive a poor bargain or to be unmercifully cheap in any of its purchases. Yet this almost and highly inferior city paid considerably more in proportion for its water pipes than is

now asked of Bloomfield. Is not the inference plain and clear? And are we not justified in believing that the price now asked of us cannot be very excessive?

But, gentlemen, there is an important legal question involved in this matter, which alone seems to me to be decisive of your duty and the course which you should pursue. In the authoritative work of Judge Dillon on Municipal Corporations (4th ed.), paragraph 299, that great master of municipal law says:

"At any time before the rights of third persons have vested, a council or other corporate body may, if consistent with its charter and rules of action, rescind previous votes and orders."

Now it is undeniable that, after the acceptance by your honorable body of the offer of the water company, there existed at once a valid legal contract between the water company and the town, subject only to the approval of the voters as specified in the statutes. The water company then most certainly acquired a vested interest in such submission of the contract to the voters in the manner pointed out by law, and, in my judgment, this Council has now no legal right to rescind its action providing for such submission.

It seems to me that when the citizens and taxpayers of Bloomfield carefully consider all these things—if they are given the time to do so—they will, if allowed to go to the polls and there quietly register their deliberate judgment, vote to purchase the present plant rather than fly to lies they know not of.

Such an opportunity ought to be given them, and in my judgment it is the imperative legal obligation of this Council to give them this opportunity. So important and vital a question, involving so many serious considerations, ought not to be decided by such methods as those pursued at last night's meeting, when citizens' minds are disturbed and clouded by questions of alleged disloyalty or by slurs and insinuations; and I trust your honorable body will allow this question to be submitted to the people on November 10, notwithstanding the "request" said to have been carried at last night's meeting.

Very respectfully yours,
SAMUEL J. MACDONALD.

Hallowe'en.

The hallowe'en observance in this town on Saturday night of last week took on a less dangerous and destructive aspect than has formerly attached to the celebration of that semi-paganistic custom. The carnivalities prevailed Saturday night and hundreds of young people and some of middle age were out on the streets in costumes of various pattern, color and combination. Some of the costumes were striking in their originality and some of artistic design and fit, but the majority were of the ludicrous and ridiculous type. Much amusement was created by the antics of the masqueraders. The crushed condition of some of the faces seen on the streets in front of some of the saloons evidenced that the celebration had in some instances assumed a hilarious degree at a late hour in the night. Those who did not march found much amusement in trying to guess the identity of those who did, and some of the most skillful makeup defied detection.

State Sunday-School Convention.

The annual State Sunday-school Convention meets this year at Newark, Wednesday and Thursday, November 19 and 20, in the Peddie Memorial Baptist Church. The elementary grade teachers will hold their institute on Tuesday and Wednesday at the First Presbyterian Church. The speakers from outside the State will be Mr. John Sparhawk, Jr., of Philadelphia, Mrs. M. B. B. Langzettel of New York, Mrs. Flora V. Stebbins of Fitchburg, Mass., and the International General Secretary, Mr. Marion Lawrence of Toledo, O. The programme promises an unusually practical and inspiring gathering. The Superintendents will hold their annual banquet and conference on Wednesday evening. Any New Jersey Sunday-school worker may become a delegate to the convention, and the State Secretary, Rev. E. M. Ferguson of Trenton will furnish programmes and instructions.

Free Organ Concert.

William C. Earl will give his 30th free organ concert in the First Presbyterian Church, Fifth avenue and Twelfth street, New York, on Tuesday evening, November 10, at 8.15 o'clock, assisted by the choir of the church (sixteen solo voices), in a programme devoted to the works of American musicians. The new organ concert by Horatio Parker will be played for the first time in New York, and works by Macdowell, Shelley, Bartlett, Land, Stebbins, Bird, Ambrose, Macfarlane, Baldwin, Kroeger and Earl will be given.

Empire Theatre.

At the Empire Theatre in Newark next week, commencing November 9, the bill will be the new edition of the very successful farce comedy "Happy Hooligan." This successful comedy and musical mélange is one of the brightest and most taking entertainments ever produced, and it will be seen this season in an entirely new dress of scenery, costumes and effects, as well as new accompaniments of music, specialties and dances. The management has expended \$25,000 on the production, and a company of all star artists will be seen in the different roles. Among the headliners may be mentioned Campbell and Caulfield, W. H. Mack, Mae Phelps, Harry S. McKee, Alice Gilmore, Mabel Stanley, Helen Donnelly, Lillian Robson, Eva Taylor, Bessie Sharp and the well liked Boston Quartette. Matinees Monday, Wednesday and Saturday.

Banjo and Violin Instruction.

Mrs. and Miss Harding, instructors on banjo, violin, mandolin and guitar in Bloomfield, Monday and Friday of each week. For particulars address Harding Studio, 137 West Fifth street, New York city.—Advt.

M. R. SHERRED'S REPORT

To the Town Council as to the Cost of Constructing a Water Plant in this Town—The Total Cost of a Duplicate Plant would be \$130,000.

M. R. Sherred, the engineer of Newark, who has much practical experience in the construction of water works systems, at the request of the Town Council submitted the following report on the cost of constructing a water works system here that will duplicate the Orange Water Company's present system:

128 Halsey Street,

NEWARK, N. J., Oct. 29, 1903.

To the Honorable Town Council of the Town of Bloomfield, N. J.:

GENTLEMEN: Pursuant to your request in regard to the proposition of the Orange Water Company to sell its water plant in Bloomfield to the town for \$150,000, I beg leave to report that I have made a careful study of the situation, and would advise as follows:

It is evident that the plant, when proper allowance is made for depreciation, etc., is not worth \$150,000 or even \$140,000, which, I am credibly informed, and as seen no reason to doubt, was the actual cost for the construction of the works. However, in the absence of legislative authority to condemn the plant, and from the point of view of the advantage of the town to own an existing and operating plant in preference to the delay, inconvenience and incidental expenses for the construction of an independent plant, it is fair to consider what might properly be charged as the probable cost of duplicating the present system and certain other considerations which should be taken into account in dealing with this question.

Based on the figures furnished by the water company giving the lengths of the several sizes of pipes, number of fixtures, etc., I estimate that the actual cost for the construction of a duplicate plant, similar to the present system at the present cost of materials and labor, figuring on the ordinary average cost for furnishing and laying pipes of the several sizes, and other fixtures, such as hydrants, valves and meters, but not including house meters, would be \$115,000. (This estimate has been made in detail, and will be furnished if desired.) Should the town build its own works and acquire the present consumers of the company, it would be necessary to transfer for the 1,400 service connections from the old to the new system. As the present plant is furnishing an adequate service to its consumers it would be unjust to ask these consumers to pay the cost of transfer, and it is therefore proper to add to the above sum an item which I would estimate to be \$5 each for the transfer of these services, which would amount to \$7,000. There would be additional cost for interest on the funds paid out during the construction before the new plant would be available, as well as incidental and engineering expenses in connection with said work, which I would estimate at \$6,000. To recapitulate, the above items would be as follows:

For construction of duplicate plant, \$115,000; for transfer of services, \$7,000; for interest, and incidental and engineering expenses, \$6,000; total, \$130,000. A large number of streets through which the water pipes are laid in Bloomfield are meandering. Information as to the actual proportion of the plant laid in such streets is not available. There should, therefore, be added to the above items some amount which I have not attempted to estimate for the restoration and maintenance of these pavements, and for the value to the town and its citizens in avoiding a general tearing up of its streets for the installation of a duplicate plant.

I would also suggest that it would be a question for careful legal consideration as to how far the company under its franchises granted by special legislative enactment could interfere by costly legal proceedings with the construction of a duplicate system.

An inspection of the map of the water distribution system in Bloomfield shows there are on certain streets duplicate mains, and in particular on Broad street, and also there is a larger main on Grove street than is at present necessary. In my judgment a duplicate system, as now in use on Broad street, is of particular advantage, and it is good engineering practice to have the local distribution pipes independent of the feeder mains. This guards against interruption to the domestic supply and interference with fire service, which invariably results from the direct distribution of water from the feeders, at times when it is necessary to take these lines temporarily out of service.

Regarding the 8-inch main on Grove street, I would say that this main would not only be of advantage if water should be procured in the future from that direction, but would also be of advantage in furnishing a feeder for that section of Bloomfield, which is bound to build up in the near future. In laying out a new system the ultimate sources of supply would of course be a factor in the location of the feeders, but the present lines could be used to advantage and are well located for any supply coming from the north. The construction of a new system would give the town an opportunity to better arrange the distribution for hydrant service, but would necessitate the laying of larger and more extensive mains for a portion of the present 4-inch lines. I find by comparing the relative lengths of the several sizes of mains in the systems in East

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Carpet Cleaning.
Now is the time to clean carpets. If you want your carpets taken up, cleaned and re-laid, send word to D. Douglass, No. 9 Park street, Montclair. Mr. Douglass has had years of experience in carpet cleaning, and has a large patronage in this town, Glen Ridge and Montclair. Those intending to move can have their carpets taken up, cleaned and re-laid on short notice. The work will be well and promptly done.—Advt.

Odorous Exterminating
Licensed by Board of Health. Odorous Exterminating orders promptly attended to at reasonable rates. Apply to or address RICHARD MAXWELL, No. 26 Clinton Street, Bloomfield.—Advt.

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